

Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02 NSAE-00

NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05

IO-10 /070 W

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P R 051031Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 1310

INFO AMCONSUL CHIANG MAI

AMCONSUL UDORN

DIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3690

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH

SUBJECT: PARLIAMENTARY VOTE OF CONFIDENCE

REF: BANGKOK 3551

SUMMARY: TWO RANKING OFFICIALS OF THE PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT TOLD US MARCH 4 THAT THEY DID NOT THINK THE DEMOCRAT-SOCIAL AGRARIAN CABINET WOULD SURVIVE THE APPROACHING VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. ONE OF THESE OFFICIALS CITED CONVERSATIONS AT THE SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY LEADER'S HOUSE WHICH STRENGTHENED HIS BELIEF THAT THE THAI NATION SOCIAL JUSTICE BLOC HAS SECURED SUPPORT FROM THE SOCIAL ACTION AND SOCIALIST PARTIES TO STOP THE DEMOCRATS. HE ALSO FELT THAT EVENTS HAD PROGRESSED TO THE POINT WHERE THE CONSERVATIVES WOULD BE ABLE TO SELECT A NEW

PRIME MINISTER, KHUKRIT PRAMOT, WITHIN 48 HOURS OF A PROJECTED DEMOCRAT DEFEAT. A DEFEATED THAI NATION CANDIDATE ALSO TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS MARCH 5 THAT HE FELT THE DEMOCRATS WOULD NO LONGER BE THE GOVERNMENT AFTER MARCH 6. END SUMMARY.

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1. PRASIT SISUCHAT, SECRETARY GENERAL OF THE PARLIAMENTARY

SECRETARIAT, TOLD THE DCM MARCH 4 THAT HE FELT THE DEMOCRAT-SOCIAL AGRARIAN CABINET WOULD FALL AS A RESULT OF THE ARTICLE 184 VOTE OF CONFIDENCE DEBATE SCHEDULED FOR MARCH 6. HE ALSO SAID THAT THE ACTUAL VOTING MIGHT TAKE PLACE ON MARCH 7.

2. PHARADA BURANASIRI (CHIEF, FOREIGN RELATIONS DIVISION, PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIAT) TOLD AN EMBASSY POLITICAL ASSISTANT MARCH 4 THAT THE THAI NATION PARTY HAD FIRMED UP ITS PLANS TO TOPPLE THE DEMOCRAT-SOCIAL AGRARIAN COALITION CABINET ON THE MARCH 6 OR 7 VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THE FIRST STEP IN THIS PROCEDURE WOULD BE TO SECURE A SECRET VOTE TO PROTECT THE OPPOSITION MEMBERS AND ALLOW THE SOCIAL ACTION PARTY (SAP) MEMBERS TO VOTE AGAINST THE DEMOCRAT GOVERNMENT. PHARADA ELABORATED THAT HE HAD SEEN SAP DEPUTY LEADER BUNTHENG THONGSAWAT (LAMPANG) AT THE RESIDENCE OF SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY LEADER THAWIT KLINPRATHUM ON THE NIGHT OF MARCH 1. PHARADA SAID THAT HE ALSO OVERHEARD PREM MALAKUN NA AYUTTHAYA (SOCIALIST PARTY OF THAILAND --UTTARADIT) SPEAKING WITH WINIT WINGTAN (SOCIAL JUSTICE PARTY --RATCHABURI) AT THAWIT'S HOUSE MARCH 2.

3. PHARADA INFERRED FROM THESE TWO INCIDENTS THAT THE THAI NATION-SOCIAL JUSTICE OPPOSITION HAD SECURED SOCIAL ACTION AND SOCIALIST PARTIES AGREEMENT TO BRING ABOUT THE FALL OF THE DEMOCRAT-SOCIAL AGRARIAN COALITION GOVERNMENT. PHARADA FELT THAT THAI NATION WOULD BE ABLE TO ANNOUNCE A NEW PRIME MINISTER, OF- VIOUSLY SAP LEADER KHUKRIT PRAMOT, WITHIN 48 HOURS OF THE DEMOCRAT'S FALL. PHARADA COUNTED AT LEAST 145 VOTES IN THE CONSERVATIVES' FAVOR AT THIS POINT.

4. IN RESPONSE TO OUR QUERY ABOUT NEWSPAPER SPECULATION CONCERNING VARIOUS OFFERS THAT SPT LEADER SOMKHIT SISANGKHOM HAS RECEIVED, PHARADA SAID THAT IT WAS HIS IMPRESSION THAT SOMKHIT WILL BE MADE ADVISER TO THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE THAI NATION GOVERNMENT. NO MEMBERS OF HIS PARTY WOULD RECEIVE CABINET POSTS, HOWEVER.

5. PRASIT CHUPHINIT, DEFEATED THAI NATION CANDIDATE FROM KAMPHENG PHET, TOLD EMBASSY OFFICERS MARCH 5 THAT THE DEMOCRATS WERE CERTAIN TO LOSE THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. PRASIT IS A LONG-TIME PARLIAMENTARIAN WHO HAS EXTENSIVE CONTACTS AMONG ALL THE CONFIDENTIAL

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MAJOR PARTIES. HE FELT THAT THE THAI NATION-SOCIAL JUSTICE BLOC HAD EFFECTIVELY TAKEN ADVANTAGE OF THE ANTAGONISMS TOWARD THE DEMOCRATS FROM A BROAD SPECTRUM OF PARTIES.

6. COMMENT: THE TREND IN THE LOCAL PRESS HAS BEEN TOWARD MORE AND MORE OPEN ADMISSION THAT THAI NATION IS ORGANIZING OPPOSITION TO THE DEMOCRATS. THAI NATION HAS PROBABLY HAD SUCH INTENTIONS

SINCE THE ELECTION, BUT HAS BEEN DEVELOPING ITS POSITION GRADUALLY IN ORDER TO TEST PUBLIC REACTION. THAI NATION MAY FEEL THE CHARADE HAS DRAGGED ON LONG ENOUGH SO THAT SOME QUARTERS ARE TIRED OF THE WHOLE POLITICAL SCENE AND HAVE TAKEN A "LET'S GET IT OVER WITH" ATTITUDE. THE THAI NATION OPPOSITION TO THE DEMOCRATS IS THEREFORE SIGNIFICANT, IS SNOWBALLING, AND COULD BE SUCCESSFUL.

7. THE CONSERVATIVES, IN THEIR ANXIETY FOR POWER, MAY BE DOING THEMSELVES IN. GIVEN THE PARLIAMENTARY MIX OF 22 WEAK PARTIES, SUCCESS OR DEFEAT OF A GOVERNMENT OR ITS POLICIES DEPENDS ON A CONSTANT RESHUFFLING OF THE PARTY CARDS. THE CONSERVATIVES COULD WELL ENCOUNTER SIMILAR TROUBLE IN GETTING THEIR POLICIES APPROVED, PARTICULARLY SINCE THE PUBLIC IS UNLIKELY TO BE TOLERANT OF AN EARLY UPSET OF THE DEMOCRAT-SOCIAL AGRARIAN COALITION. THE KING WILL BE EMBARRASSED BY THE TURNING OUT OF A CABINET ON WHICH HE HAS ALREADY BESTOWED HIS IMPRIMATUR. THE MILITARY WILL CITE THE CIVILIAN INCAPACITY TO UNITE IN THE NATIONAL CAUSE. POLITICAL CONFUSION, IF NOT CHAOS, WILL CHARACTERIZE A SENI DEFEAT.
KINTNER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: COALITION GOVERNMENT, CABINET, VOTE OF CONFIDENCE, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: CunninFX
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975BANGKO003690
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750077-0043
From: BANGKOK
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750382/aaaacvro.tel
Line Count: 135
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: 75 BANGKOK 3551
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: CunninFX
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 24 JUL 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <24 JUL 2003 by BoyleJA>; APPROVED <20 NOV 2003 by CunninFX>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: PARLIAMENTARY VOTE OF CONFIDENCE
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, TH
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006